

A Cancelled 2-Cent Stamp.

An Old Farmer, a Civil War Veteran and Indian Scout, Runs Against the Red Tape of Federal Authority.

(This article gives an idea of the doings in Federal courts, where a lot of useless tax-eaters kill time harassing their betters. An old farmer who innocently placed a cancelled stamp on a letter and mailed it, is brought into court. But Harriman, who used the mails to defraud the people out of fifty million dollars in one deal, has not been discovered by government detectives.—Editor.)

G. W. Ogden in American Magazine.

"It's this-a-way, jurge," the prisoner explained, wadding his cap in his nervous hands, "my eyesight ain't as good as it was once, say when I was gov'ment scout with General Miles when we fit the Apaches. I'm gittin' old, jurge, an' I give you m' word an' doner that if there stamp's been dabbed with ink, I never seen it."

The deputy marshal who had brought the old man from his home in the Ozarks to answer to the charge of washing and using a canceled two-cent stamp, leaned over and whispered confidentially in the United States commissioner's ear. The commissioner, a string of a young man with a knot at one end, resented this confidence. "No secrets here, Mr. Hind, if you please," he instructed sharply. "Whatever evidence you have to offer against the prisoner you may bring out above your breath."

He took the mused envelope, to which the stamp in question was affixed, and examined it. The stamp had doubtless been canceled in some rural office where the postmaster had used the cork of his ink-bottle as a die, and it looked as if he had walked across it with his muddy feet as an additional precaution.

"My eyes," the old man repeated, "ain't nigh what they used to be, jurge, an' if that there stamp was canceled, I never was able to make it out."

"Where did you get it?" asked the commissioner.

"Well, when I written that letter to m' son, jurge, they wasn't nobody at home but me, an' m' wife, when she was goin' over to the Samuelses that mornin', she said, last thing before she shed Old Mother Hubbard an' her gang o' chickens up so's that the cat would not git at 'em, she said I'd find a stamp in her ridicule hangin' in the sage poke when I got up to the p'int where I'd need one. I said I 'lowed it'd be purty late by the time I got the letter writ and the invilp licked, 'cause I'm a slow hand at writin', jurge, a powerful slow hand, but they ain't a'n' 'nother 'n in the family at can beat me. When I write, jurge, I got to have the whole house to m' self. I pack the old woman an' kids off some place, an' 'en I begin."

"Well, it was nigh dark when I got done that letter, an' I taken this stamp out of the ridicule, jurge, but it didn't 'pear to have no do-good on the back of it, so I slapped a gob o' lasses onto it an' stuck it on, then I linked out to Lone Tree an' shoved it through the hole in Pi Lukerses door. Well, the old woman she was a-pokin' aroun' in her ridicule that night, lookin' for a piece of beeswax I use to waxen the thread with when I mend shoes I was a-puttin' a patch on Kit Carson's boot, Kit Carson he's m' son, jurge, full name's Kit Carson Nelson, an' a-froelickin' when I left here this mornin' to git into that feller's wool."

"Goin' past a store where they kep' used things for sale, I saw this here double-barrel, britch-loadin' ten-bore, with twenty-five loaded shells, for four dollars an' a half. It's a used gun, jurge, but it's a good 'n, an' I in an' buys it. I'm here now a-watchin' for that dep'ty, an' I jist 'lowed I'd tell you, if you hear any commotion out here in this lane, jurge, don't you pay no 'tention to it, 'cause it'll only be me a-takin' a crack at that skunk. After I fix him I 'low to rack out an' walk back home. I won't mind the tramp at all, jurge, after I get this often my mind. I hate like sixty to do a job like this with a shotgun, it musses a feller up so, but m' rifle's a hang-in' on the rack down home."

It took considerable argument to convince the old man that he would get himself into more and deeper trouble by shooting the deputy. "You don't say so," he commented. "Well, beat me, the law changes so, dat me I kain't keep track of half of it any more. Mean to tell me, man, it's agin the law to plug a feller that drags down your good name?"

"I am obliged to assure you that such is the shameful fact, Mr. Mink, said the commissioner. "Well, I'm kind o' fuddled. What's this here country a-comin' to when a law steps up and says: 'Hold on, man, you kain't shoot a feller no more 'cause he's made you out a thief when you ain't, 'cause

with your case? The court accepts your excuse for being late, in fact, as you are here on the appointed day, and will take your case up in due time. Find a seat somewhere, now, and wait till you are called."

Minkel stood turning his hat, raised his eyes, cloyed with the mists of years and adversity, and begged, "Leave me make myself plain, jurge, while I've got the heart an' the courage to do it, won't you, your honor, jurge?"

The waiting lawyers inside the rail stirred nervously and some of them went into the corridor to smoke. A few court loungers drew nearer, and the reporters came to life. The judge, apparently bent on humoring the extraordinary old man, turned his severe gaze on Joe Hooker and said:

"It's a serious offense, young man, to desert the United States army."

"He knows it, jurge. He knows it as well as he knows right an' wrong in anything, an' when he comes home, with his honorable uniform sunk in the bottom of some river an' them old duds you see on him in its place, I told him there wasn't no place of refuge in my house for any man, flesh and blood of mine though he might be, that'd turn his back on the flag. You got to go back, Joe Hooker, I says, 'an' take your medicine like a man. You orto a-stayed in the first place, but sense you didn't, sense your old daddy's teachin's to you in your young days an' all your dad-blame life to be honorable an' honest an' gritty, sense all them teachin's is throwed away an' lost on you, Joe Hooker, we got to bring the lessons over agin. Homesick ain't as bad as disgrace. Homesick'll wear off in time, if you hold down your chunk like a little man, but disgrace sticks like the meat on your bones an' sets on top of your grave when you're dead an' gone. You're a-goin' back, Joe Hooker; they ain't no other way."

"An' so, in spite of his mother's beggin', in spite of all that could be said by all, I've bring him back, jurge, an' by the God in heaven I'd a-bring him back if I'd a-had to lash him hand an' foot an' drug him all the way, 'r if I'd a-had to a-took an' hardened m' heart an' a-brought back nothin' but his cold body, stiff an' dead. He listed here, an' I'm a-goin' to take him to that recruitin' officer an' says: 'Here's a deserter from the army, a feller you're a-lookin' for. I know he's the right man, 'cause he's m' son. He's come back to take his medicine like a man.'"

"We drove from home in m' wagon, jurge, an' I started in time to git here this mornin', but one of m' wheels caved in twenty mile 'r so back, an' we left the outfit an' hoofed it the rest of the way. Now, what I want to ast of you, jurge, is this: Excuse me on that trial of the Pi Lukerses case till I can go with Joe Hooker to the recruitin' office. I'll come back."

The judge looked down at the district attorney, and the district attorney arose. "Your honor," said he, "the government desires to dismiss the case against Henry Minkel, charged with washing and using a canceled United States postage stamp of the denomination of two cents." As he spoke he handed the papers in the case to the judge, who scribbled a moment on them and passed them to the clerk.

"Very well, Mr. Minkel, you are free," said he. "Which, jurge?"

"You may go, the government has decided it has no case against you."

"That'll go down on the records that-a-way! My name'll be 'cl'ar on the books of the Union agin!"

"Just as clear as if you had never been charged with any crime at all."

"Thank you, jurge, and gentlemen, said Minkel, fervently, as he turned to go."

Wait a moment, Mr. Minkel, said the judge, coming down to the little platform where the witness chair stood. I want to have the honor of grasping the hand of a patriot and an old-fashioned honest man."

As his hands touched Minkel raised his eyes to the judge's face. It's hard on a man, jurge, said he, his deep voice shaken by a sob, it's mighty hard!

Justice is indeed sometimes cruel, the judge replied. I have often found it so in my long life. Minkel drew his thin shoulders back and lifted his chin. I don't mean it that-a-way, jurge, he said. I mean it hurts a man to have his boy turn his back on the flag. Come on here, you Joe Hooker, come on and take your medicine like a man!

St. Louis Labor:—The "Kicker" is still delivering weekly broadsides into the old party machines in Scott county. A new Democratic paper has been started, with the object in view of lessening the "Kicker's" influence. Comrade Hafner states that the melon farmers are now feeling the panic. Melons are so cheap that it does not pay to load them on the cars. Carloads are being fed to the hogs. And just think that in the large cities there are many people who get none at all. Great system of production and distribution.

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SACREDNESS OF PROPERTY.

We hear a great deal about the "rights" and the "sacredness" of property. I admit that the present system gives more protection to property than to the lives, rights and happiness of citizens, but, after all, how secure is property under this cut-throat system? If the party or parties wanting your property are strong enough, they will get it—somehow.

In Pennsylvania an old mother and her son were living in a cottage where the family had been reared and the father had died. The cottage was near a steel mill and the company needed the ground. Every effort to buy the cottage failed—for the place was dear to the old mother. It was home, and she did not want to part with it.

One day the mother and son were away. The company put a force of men to work and in two hours the cottage was torn down. They took possession of the ground and held it. The only recourse the old mother had was the courts—and I need not tell you what it means for a poor person to get into court with a rich corporation or individual.

But we need not go to Pennsylvania. How many families have been skinned out of their homes in Scott county? Thirty years ago we were a county of home-owners. Today we are a county of tenants. Thirty years ago, when your home was sold "under the hammer," you had a right to redeem it. But your landlords have been making laws for you, and you know your interests and their interests are identical and today there is no redemption of the home.

Under our present system the men of wealth have every advantage. We are governed by courts, and they own the courts—especially the higher courts. Last year Frank Grant and Jerry Minter, who lived on Little River, had three horses on the range. They strayed into Oran and ran up against a stock law. The two farmers did not learn of the whereabouts of their horses until they had been put up and sold and Billy Stubbfield had bought them for. I believe, eight dollars besides their keep. They brought nothing because the average citizen does not care to buy a law suit. But "law" is the long suit of the rich.

When the farmers learned of the whereabouts of their horses, they tried to get them, but failed. They brought suit in replevin and a jury in the circuit court gave the farmers their horses. But the well-to-do are never satisfied with the jury trials of lower courts. Such trials are too close to justice and contain too little "law." An appeal was taken by Mr. Stubbfield and I predict he will get what he wants from the higher court. But even if the farmers win, they will be out more than the value of their horses, for they have already gone through circuit court and it costs probably \$150 to go higher.

Socialism would put an end to this inequality between rich and poor in court. Justice would be administered free to all and victory would not depend on the number of lawyers you were able to bribe nor on a class-conscious judge on the bench.

Our present judicial system skins those who can stand it least. But the American people are great when it comes to "standing on their rights." The blamed fools are hard to convince that they have no rights—except such as money will buy.

THE SOCIALIST VOTE. The Socialist vote of the state for W. L. Garver, candidate for governor, is given at 4,044. The heaviest vote was in the 14th congressional district, which cast 1,012 votes for N. B. Wilkinson for congressman. M. C. Doorn, for state senator from this district, received 481 votes. The Doorn figures are hard to understand, since the Socialists polled 370 votes in Scott and 97 in Stoddard—a total of 467.

Of the vote St. Louis Labor says:—In many places the judges and clerks of election did not take the trouble to enter the Socialist vote on the official report sheet and our vote was not counted. Many counties have failed to report our vote, as the primary law requires. In St. Louis the judges and clerks were so busy counting Cowherd in that the vote of the Socialist Party was entirely lost in many precincts.

At the present rate of increase it will not be long until the Socialists will be able to protect their vote.

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President of the United States, last night addressed the district Socialist meeting in progress at Lincoln Park.

"Debs kept his audience spell-bound for two hours, and there were many in the large audience who were not Socialists."

"The auditorium was filled to its capacity and many stood on the outside unable to get a seat. The address was intermittently and vigorously applauded by the Socialists but frequently outbreaks of disapproval or an occasional outcry of sarcasm from some individual in the audience showed plainly that it was a mixed audience that greeted the presidential candidate."

"Debs is quite a forceful speaker. Turn him loose before an army of disconsolate or unemployed workmen and he can talk to them in a way that will ease their hearts." At many of his dramatic climaxes there were some stirring scenes enacted by the crowd. Thunderous applause was frequent and several exclamations sanctioning a point were heard during the address, which lasted most of two hours. Debs jumped right into his theme and kept pounding it into the hearts and minds of the crowd until he closed his address. He declared that the parties of the present time—Republican and Democratic—were responsible for the conditions of the government at this time, as they had been in the saddle for fifty years.

"The Republican party is squarely on record for capital. The Socialist Party is squarely on record for the laboring man, and the Democratic party—well, it is trying to go on record in favor of both," says Debs.

"The speaker dealt out some short, pointed sayings such as these: 'There is 65 per cent of the union men of New York state out of work. What's the excuse for this?'

"The workers will only begin to live when they get rid of capitalists." This was greeted with enthusiastic applause.

"Socialism isn't to destroy the home and induce free love. It is to better the home life and give every man what he produces."

"We don't want you vote if you don't know what you are voting for."

"We won't influence your vote by whiskey."

"We are the only party on earth that actually recognizes a woman. We believe she should vote. Why, if I were a member of any other party I would be ashamed to go home and look my wife in the face."

"Debs declared that there will be more men out of work this winter than there are at this time. He pictures a dark future for the next five or seven years. He scathingly referred to Rockefeller and Harriman, Morgan and J. J. Hill during his speeches, calling them parasites."

"No man can vote either the Democratic or Republican ticket and be a friend of labor," said Debs. "For the reason that both are capitalist parties. There is a great and irrepressible conflict in this country between labor and capital. The Socialist Party is the only labor party in this country. The one great issue of this campaign is which shall rule, capital or labor?"

"When the voter wakes up to the fact that there is a mighty war being waged for supremacy between these two great economic forces, said Debs, 'he will begin to understand what is meant by class-consciousness.'"

Mr. Debs closed his remarks with a masterful tribute to labor, in which he gave his audience a taste of his oratorical ability and mastery of rhetoric.

WHO'S COMING AROUND?

It looks a little odd to see editorials in the columns of the St. Louis Republic in Mr. Bryan's behalf. The distinguished Nebraskan has twice led the Democratic party in a presidential campaign, and this is the first time that Missouri Democrats have had the pleasure of seeing Bryan editorials in the columns of the Republic. "Old 1808" has been a long time about coming around, but better late, perhaps, than never.—Jackson Cash-Book.

Is Bro. McGuire really so party-blind that he cannot see who it is that is "coming around"? What is there in the Bryan platform of today the Republic or the capitalists that own it, need to fear?

Let Bro. Mc. compare the Bryan platform of 1896 and 1900 with the Bryan platform of 1908 and he may be able to see who it is that is "coming around." But we need not go back eight years nor twelve years. I have before me the Commoner condensed for 1907—W. J. Bryan editor. Read what the "peerless one" had to say only last year about the asset or emergency currency measure that was then pending in congress, passed last winter and endorsed by the Bryan platform of 1908. Read.

"The financiers are planning to make another descent upon congress in the interest of asset currency. It will be remembered that at a meeting held after the last election the bankers' association formulated a plan and presented it to congress. But even when the election was over the republican congressmen were afraid to endorse this scheme, and the bill was never brought before the house. An effort is being made to revive the scheme, but it will hardly meet a better fate at this time now that the presidential election is approaching. Knowing that public sentiment is against an asset currency, the friends of this policy call it an emergency currency."

So you see, Bro. Mc., that only a year ago Mr. Bryan was very much opposed to asset or emergency currency. Now I want you to read the following from the Bryan platform of 1908:

"We believe that insofar as the needs of commerce require an emergency currency, such currency should be issued, controlled by the federal government and loaned on adequate security to national and state banks."

Who is coming around?

THE RED SPECIAL.

The Socialists of the United States are doing things. While Taft and Bryan are talking into phonographs so that "banned" speeches may be delivered to the people—thus avoiding the unpleasantness of answering perplexing questions—the Socialists have started their candidate for president across the country in a special train to talk to the people and answer all questions.

This train is known as the "Red Special" because it is red in color, and the funds to carry it across the country is being raised by the Socialists all over the nation. The cost is \$20,000 and over half of this has already been paid in. The Red Special left Chicago on its historic mission Sunday with Gene Debs on board, and it will hit all the high places between the Atlantic and the Pacific.

Debs is a wonder. Wherever he goes he sets the people on fire. Old men who remember the stirring times of fifty years ago, say that Debs reminds them of Lincoln. During August Debs campaigned in Kansas and below are some of the reports of his meetings by capitalist papers.

From the Parsons, (Kans.) Daily Eclipse:—"The Elks" Theater was crowded last night with people who turned out to hear Eugene V. Debs. Notwithstanding the warm weather, it was noticeable that such a large part of the audience was composed of women. The seating capacity was overcrowded and many were compelled to stand.

Another peculiar feature was the fact that an admission fee of ten cents was charged at the door. The expense of the meeting was met in this way by the Socialists of the city, many of them subscribing for a number of tickets which they disposed of to their friends. There was a long string of vehicles on Eighteenth street and also on Main street, showing that many of Debs' hearers had come in from the country to hear him.

Debs declared and reiterated the statement that the "self-conscious workman was not voting either the Republican or Democratic ticket." His speech was Socialistic from start to finish, and the large audience seemed to be in accord with him. As Debs grows older he seems to be growing more intense in his manner of delivery.

From the Pittsburg, (Kans.) Daily Headlight:

"Eugene V. Debs, the great champion of Socialism and the Socialist Party's nominee for the office of

President of the United States, last night addressed the district Socialist meeting in progress at Lincoln Park.

"Debs kept his audience spell-bound for two hours, and there were many in the large audience who were not Socialists."

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